UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Thursday, 15 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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92-57032 6061S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.15
21 October 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH (A/47/312-S/24238)

(b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (A/47/31)

1. Mr. DE SOUZA (Rector, United Nations University), introducing the report of the Council of the United Nations University (A/47/31), said that the University had just moved into its new permanent headquarters in Tokyo. The new building would be formally inaugurated at the end of February 1993, and the Governing Council had rescheduled its regular December 1992 session so as to coincide with that occasion. He thanked the Government and people of Japan for having provided such outstanding modern facilities, and also thanked the Governor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government who had played a key role in making available the grounds on which the building had been constructed.

2. The move to the new headquarters marked a new phase in the institutional growth and development of the University. In its early years, the University's work had been conducted in collaboration with a variety of networks of existing institutions and had been coordinated from the Centre in Tokyo. The University's first Research and Training Centre (RTC), the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER), had been established in 1985. Work on other such centres and programmes had been moving at an increasingly faster pace. The third RTC, the International Institute for Software Technology (UNUIIST), in Macau, had become operational in July and the Generalitat of Catalunya had just agreed to contribute US$ 21 million over the next seven years towards the establishment and operation of an RTC in Barcelona, devoted to the subject of governance, State and society. He would be signing a memorandum of understanding with the Generalitat the very next day to undertake preparatory activities on areas or issues likely to be included in the future programme of that centre. Preparatory work towards the possible setting up of a programme for marine science and ocean affairs was under way in Italy with financial support from the regional authorities of Sardinia, and an international feasibility study team funded by the Government of the province of Ontario, Canada, would soon begin exploring the possibility of establishing a centre or programme in Ontario on environment and health. The Institute of Advanced Studies in Japan would start its activities in the next few months, and should be fully operational within two or three years.

3. Institutional and programmatic growth was now managed within the framework of the periodic meetings of the Conference of Directors of Research and Training Centres and Programmes. Those ongoing discussions had pointed to the need to further promote the relationship between the University and the RTCs, as well as for closer academic links and interactions among the latter. The University was elaborating an extensive academic programme of research and policy studies, post-graduate and other training activities, to take place in Japan between 1993 and 1995. The projects would deal with some critical and

complementary aspects of the management of global interdependence. The first group of activities would focus on the future role of the United Nations, with particular attention to peace-keeping and official development assistance. The other clusters of issues would deal with environmental matters and methodologies and experiences for large-scale problem-solving. The Council would review those proposals at its next session.

4. The University had sought to assist the United Nations and UNESCO to the fullest extent possible, and in the current year had contributed to a study of the role of the United Nations system in the field of economic and social development in the 1990s. The UNU/WIDER programme on economics of environment and development had provided significant inputs to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with regard to resource requirements for a global environmental compact for sustainable development. The University had been chosen by the Conference secretariat to take the lead in writing the chapter of Agenda 21 on sustainable mountain development, within the framework of its Programme on Mountain Ecology and Sustainable Development. With a view to promoting fuller interfacing with the United Nations system, it also intended to consult more closely with senior United Nations officials in planning its programmes and projects.

5. His long-term goal was to build up an institution geared to the creation and mobilization of knowledge in furtherance of the United Nations goals. In just 20 years, the University had managed to carve out for itself a privileged niche in the international academic community. Research results in fields such as nutrition problems in developing countries, the mountain ecosystem, alternative energy systems, environmental issues and economic reforms in former socialist countries had received international recognition. Over 2,000 young researchers from developing countries had received training as UNU fellows, and about 300 publications and five periodicals had been issued. As a growing institution, the University must constantly evolve in the areas of programme planning, implementation, evaluation, fund-raising and administration. In order for it to fulfil its mandate, the University must have access to adequate resources, primarily through endowment income, but also through annual operating and project contributions from governmental and non-governmental sources. In that context, continued support would be crucial in the years to come.

6. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that the University had been established in 1973 in order to gather knowledge to help resolve pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare. With drastic and unforeseen changes taking place all around the globe, its role had now become more important than ever. It took time for an academic institution to achieve the solid results that would secure its reputation. Although the University was still far from fulfilling the vision of its founders, it had done significant work during its brief existence. The University should contribute to the work of other United Nations bodies as it had to the Rio Conference; and the United Nations family should utilize the University more actively. In that way, it would come to

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

serve as an important arm of the United Nations, providing research services to the entire system.

7. The University had taken the initiative of launching a new plan of action to address issues such as environmental engineering, the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, official development assistance, peace-keeping operations and urban technologies. It was working to secure more active involvement of Japanese researchers with expertise in those areas, and to organize other activities at the new headquarters. He hoped that that initiative would enable the world to cope more effectively with issues transcending national boundaries and requiring a collective global effort. The research and training centres and programmes had an important role to play in fulfilling the University's overall objectives, by linking scholars from varying political and cultural backgrounds around the world without moving them from their home universities. His delegation thus welcomed the recent establishment of the International Institute for Software Technology (UNUIIST), and the imminent signing of the memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a new RTC on governance, State and society in Barcelona. His delegation was pleased to announce that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government had formally decided to provide the Institute of Advanced Studies in Japan with land and a building adjacent to the University's new headquarters; construction would start the following month.

8. With the expansion of its network of institutions, the utmost care must be taken to ensure that the University maintained its coherence, its integrity, and a common vision and strategy. Welcome measures had already been taken to guard against the danger of fragmentation. Such efforts should continue, and the role of the University headquarters as nerve centre of that network should be strengthened.

9. If the University was fully to carry out its mandate, adequate funds must be made available to it. Unfortunately, the Endowment Fund remained at a level far below that originally targeted. His delegation appreciated the Rector's fund-raising efforts and expressed the hope that Governments, non-governmental organizations and public and private donors would make financial contributions to the University commensurate with the important role envisioned by its founders. At the same time, administrative costs must be reduced as much as possible. The University Council had a vital role in that regard, and its function should accordingly be strengthened.

10. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the University had a unique mandate to mobilize the intellectual resources of the world to address pressing global problems. Its achievements were already considerable, and the issues identified in its second medium-term perspective were of vital concern to the developed and developing countries.

11. His delegation welcomed the programme on multilateralism and the United Nations. The results of UNU research should be widely disseminated,

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

particularly within the United Nations system: it was thus encouraging to note that the University was giving particular attention to that matter, and that the UNU/WIDER report entitled "Toward a Global Environmental Compact" had been quoted extensively and adopted by the preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. He also noted with pleasure that the International Institute for Software Technology had become operational, and expressed the hope that the University would establish more such centres with a global outlook in the developing countries.

12. Sri Lankan institutions and scholars had been closely associated with UNU programmes from the outset, and several studies carried out by UNU, such as the UNU/WIDER country study on stabilization and adjustment policies and programmes, had been of direct interest to his country.

13. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

14. Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica) said that the University had the unique function of harnessing the efforts of the international scientific community to the resolution of global problems and, in accordance with its second medium-term perspective for the years 1990-1995, was focusing on such critical issues as peace and conflict resolution, the world economy and global life support systems, all of great relevance to the international community and, in particular, to the agenda of the United Nations.

15. She noted the establishment of the Institute for Software Technology and the University's contribution to work on the environment, such as its research on mountain ecology and sustainable development. She also noted with pride that the 1992 World Food Prize had been awarded to Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, Director of the UNU Programme on Food and Nutrition for Human and Social Development.

16. Although the World Institute of Development Economics Research in Helsinki enjoyed considerable international acclaim, it was seldom identified as an integral unit of the University, which was consequently deprived of due credit for the Institute's achievements. She stressed the need for more aggressive strategies to overcome the relative invisibility of the University and to ensure that its collaboration with the international academic community was expanded, particularly in the developing countries. Enhanced coordination with other United Nations bodies with comparable sectoral mandates was also necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the University's work, particularly in the context of the Organization's current restructuring and revitalization. The United Nations system should take fuller advantage of the University's research capacity and its networking capabilities.

17. The University's move to its new headquarters would provide a valuable opportunity to extend the range of its academic activities and to enhance its interaction with the scientific community of Japan. That, together with the other developments she had highlighted, promised to open a new, dynamic phase

(Mrs. Mair, Jamaica)

in the University's career and to bring it closer to its goal of a unique international community of scholars inspired by the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. As the chairperson of the University Council, she appealed to all Member States to make new or additional contributions to assist the University in meeting those objectives.

18. Mr. JIN Tongchao (China) said that the United Nations University had made commendable headway in an international climate hardly conducive to institutional development, and he pledged China's continued support for the work of the Institute.

19. China regretted that its suggestion to reduce the frequency of University Council meetings to once a year with consequent savings of US$ 100,000, had not been taken up. He therefore suggested that the cost of one meeting should be borne by the University and of the other meeting by the Council members and that the $100,000 thus saved should be reallocated for research and training purposes.

20. Mr. Piriz-Ballón (Uruguay), Chairman, resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/47/6, programmes 11-24, 30-34, 37 and 45)

21. Mr. CLARKE (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, drew attention to programme 16, "Environment" which had not been discussed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in September 1992 at its resumed thirty-second session owing to the non-availability of the relevant documentation, and stressed the importance of the proposed amendment to paragraph 16.14 (new paragraph 16.15), which referred to the need for the medium-term plan to take full account of decisions adopted during the current session of the General Assembly concerning the outcome of UNCED.

22. Turning to the proposed amendment to paragraph 16.31 (new paragraph 16.32), his delegation believed that the sentence in question should be revised to read: "The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recommended the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994", thus bringing it into line with the language used in Agenda 21.

23. The European Community and its member States hoped that those proposed amendments would be endorsed by the Committee in any report to be prepared on the subject and it requested the Chairman to prepare a draft decision for transmission to the Fifth Committee after appropriate consideration by the members of the Second Committee.

24. Mr. NKOUNKOU (the Congo) said, with reference to programme 17, "Science and technology for sustainable development", that his delegation supported the recommendations by CPC and he stressed that the revisions proposed within that programme should place greater emphasis on the needs of developing countries, particularly with regard to the strengthening of their technological capacities and their access to new technologies.

25. Turning to programme 30, "Regional cooperation for development in Africa", he said that, while he supported the CPC recommendations, he questioned the advisability of creating new institutions and suggested that efforts should be made instead to strengthen those already existing. At the same time, close attention should be given to the impact of the structural adjustment programmes implemented by African countries, and, in particular, to the social costs of those programmes. Particular attention should also be given to the question of the external debt of middle-income countries.

26. The Congo remained convinced of the key importance for subregional integration of the multinational programming and operational centres and stressed the need to strengthen those centres. The decision to stop financial support for the positions of coordinators of women's issues in those centres, violated the spirit of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, adopted at Arusha in 1989 and would seriously jeopardize the participation of African women in development.

27. With reference to programme 45, "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development", he noted with regret the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and expressed the hope that the broad international consensus on the need to support the development efforts of African countries, expressed in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted in 1991, would be translated into appropriate concerted action.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that he intended to transmit copies of the summary records containing the Committee's views on item 105 to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.